

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated December 8, 2003, having a shortened statutory period set to expire March 8, 2004. In the present Amendment, Claims 7, 13, 16-17, 19-20 and 22-23 are canceled, Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14, 18 and 21 are amended, and Claims 24-33 are entered. Thus, Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14-15, 18, 21 and 24-33 are now pending.

In paragraph 3 of the present Office Action, Claims 9-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,611,860 to *Ying*. In addition, in paragraph 5 of the present Office Action, Claims 1-2 and 4-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. US 6,611,860 to *Ying* in view of US Patent No. 5,815,660 to *Momona*. Finally, in paragraph 6 of the present Office Action, Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over *Ying* in view of *Momona* in further view of US Patent No. 5,917,808 to *Kosbab*.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of Claims 9-12, 14-15, 18, 21 and submits that these claims are not rendered unpatentable by *Ying*, whether considered alone or in combination with *Momona* and/or *Kosbab*, because the cited references do not individually or collectively teach or suggest each claim feature. For example, the combination of cited references does not teach or suggest the communication protocol recited in exemplary Claim 9. As recited in amended Claim 9, that communication protocol includes two stages. In the first stage, "each of the plurality of slave computer systems receiv[es] a session request from a master computer system on the common communication channel" and responds by "changing from a receive mode to an answer mode in which all of plurality of slave computer systems are in communication with the master computer system via the common communication channel." In the second stage, "the plurality of slave computer systems thereafter receiv[es] ... a second request containing a unique identifier of a particular slave computer system among the plurality of slave computer systems," which causes "the particular slave computer system [to] maintain[] communication with the master computer system in the answer mode and each other slave computer system not identified by the unique identifier ... [to] disconnect[] from communication with the master computer system and return[] to the receive mode."

Ying does not teach or suggest the two stage communication methodology recited in exemplary Claim 9. Instead, as pointed out by the Examiner at page 2 of the present Office Action, does not teach or suggest the two stage communication methodology recited in exemplary Claim 9. Instead, as pointed out by the Examiner at page 2 of the present Office Action, *Ying* teaches that "each of the slave nodes receives the control message, but only reacts if it recognizes its own identification number or address in the control message." Thus, *Ying* discloses only a single-stage communication protocol, and fails to teach or suggest the session request recited in exemplary Claim 9, which causes each of the plurality of slave computer systems to "chang[e] from a receive mode to an answer mode in which all of plurality of slave computer systems are in communication with the master computer system via the common communication channel." Absent the disclosure of this feature, *Ying* (whether considered alone or in combination with *Momona* and/or *Kosbab*) does not render Claims 9-12, 14-15, 18, 21 unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103.

Applicant respectfully submits that the foregoing remarks directed to exemplary Claim 9 also patentably distinguish Claims 1-2 and 4-6 and 8 over the combination of *Ying* and *Momona* and patentably distinguish Claim 3 over the combination of *Ying*, *Momona* and *Kosbab*. That is, exemplary Claim 1, like Claim 9 discussed above, recites a two-stage communication protocol. In the first stage, "a master computer system direct[s] a single session request to all of a plurality of slave computer systems all coupled to a common communication channel to cause all of the plurality of slave computer systems to change from an answer mode to a receive mode in which all of the plurality of slave computer systems are in communication with the master computer system via the common communication channel." In the second stage, "the master computer system thereafter transmit[s] ... a second request to establish communication with only a particular slave computer system among the plurality of slave computer systems."

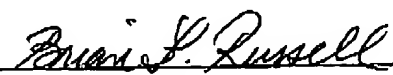
As discussed above, *Ying* does not teach or suggest such a two-stage communication protocol. Applicant's position is confirmed by the Examiner at page 7 of the present Office Action, where the Examiner states "Ying fails to disclose receiving and responding to the session request by the plurality of slave computer systems." Page 7 of the present Office Action goes on

to cite col. 1, lines 23-35 of *Momona* as teaching that a master station polls each slave station and the slave stations respond by transmitting data to the master station. While the cited passage teaches a master station polling individual slave stations, the cited passage of *Momona* fails to teach or suggest a "single session request" transmitted to all of the plurality of slave computer systems that causes the slave computer systems to responding by changing from an answer mode to a receive mode. Consequently, when *Momona* is combined with *Ying*, that combination does not teach or suggest each feature recited in exemplary Claim 1. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that Claim 1 and its dependent claims are not rendered unpatentable by *Ying*, *Momona* and/or *Kosbab*.

Having now responded to each objection and rejection set forth in the present Office Action, Applicant believes all pending claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests such allowance.

Please charge IBM CORPORATION Deposit Account No. 50-0563 in the amount of \$172.00 for 2 additional claims in excess of 3. No additional fee is believed to be required; however, in the event any additional fees are required, please charge IBM CORPORATION Deposit Account No. 50-0563.

Respectfully submitted,


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